



Handbook for eMentoring

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Part One Introduction to mentoring

What is mentoring?

Mentoring can mean a lot of different things to different people. It is about relationships that support long term growth and learning. Mentoring encourages reflection, support, learning, action and professional development. Usually, the mentoring relationship is between an experienced member of staff (mentor) and a less experienced person (mentee). Mentoring is a relationship that encourages growth and development in a respectful and friendly environment ¹.

Mentoring is not about checking up on people's skills or competence ². Neither is mentoring about being told what to do - if you want advice and help with a specific work skill, you may be better off seeking it from the people you work with.

Mentoring is carried out away from the workplace. Mentoring aims to support critical reflection and questioning with the effect of helping people to find their own answers. Other aspects of mentoring may include career advice, help with networking, sponsorship, sharing information and resources. Needless to say, every mentoring relationship is different and should meet the individual needs of mentor and mentee.



Lisa and Anne

Lisa was a care giver who was responsible for visiting Mrs Smith in her home providing personal care. Lisa told her mentor, Anne, that she wasn't sure how to use the bath lift and was concerned that she might hurt her back. Anne suggested that Lisa check the information in the health and safety guidelines and manual handling policy. Lisa went away and read these resources and became interested in issues of health and safety. Lisa's manager sent her on a course, and Lisa became the organisation's health and safety officer.

Models of mentoring

Mentoring has a number of different meanings and forms in which it is carried out.

Sponsorship

The mentor is senior in the organisation, and actively helps the mentee to develop his/her career in the organisation 2.



Liz and Rianne

Liz was a registered nurse who had just moved into a management role. Liz worked in a rural aged and community care service and did not know anyone else who was a manager. Liz told her mentor, Rianne, that she felt very isolated – all her friends were clinical nurses who did not understand the issues she faced as a manager. Rianne linked Liz to another experienced manager who worked in the organisation. She also identified other learning networks including an email discussion group that was made up of managers from all over the state, and a local network that held face-to-face meetings. Liz

was able to make professional connections with people she could relate to and support her in her new role.

Developmental

The developmental model of mentoring is focused on personal development which may result in career success. The mentor is experienced in the issues that are affecting the mentee, and supports the mentee in achieving self-directed learning.



Peter and Daphne

Peter was a new-graduate physiotherapist whose manager wanted him to carry out a treatment that he knew was no longer considered to be best practice. But he was concerned that if he challenged his manager about the treatment, he might find himself in his manager's bad books. Daphne, his mentor, walked Peter through some reflective practice exercises. This helped Peter to work out strategies to work with his manager in a more assertive and constructive way. Daphne also told Peter of web sites and databases where he could find the latest evidence about treatments. Peter went back to his manager and told her about the latest treatment and offered to present a session to the staff about it. His manager was pleased to be able to provide the staff with an in-service training session that did not cost the organisation anything. Peter felt a lot more confident about his ability to be an autonomous practitioner.

Informal

Mentoring also happens informally when two people naturally gravitate together into a mentoring relationship that suits both people's needs 3.



Lenny and Nula

Lenny was a young woman who wanted to be a nurse but had had to put the idea on hold because she had two small babies. In the meantime, she worked two days a week as a kitchen hand in a community care service. Nula had been a nurse for nearly 30 years and was the manager of the local community care service. She lived next door to Lenny, and occasionally baby-sat for her. When Lenny felt she was ready to think about doing her nurse training, Nula talked to her about what it meant to be a nurse, pointed her to resources and courses she needed to do to prepare herself, and helped her prepare her CV, portfolio and application to university.

Other methods of support and professional development

In healthcare, mentoring does overlap at times with other forms of professional development and support ⁴. This can lead to confusion about the terms and what they mean. Here are some terms that you may hear about which should not be confused with eMentoring.

Preceptorship. This is a form of support that focuses on orientation to the clinical workplace, and development of skills. A preceptor shows a new member of staff or student ‘the ropes’, and helps them become familiar with the work place and the skills they need to do their job.

Supervision. A senior person monitors the work and practice of another member of staff place in the face-to-face workplace. Supervision focuses on the competence of the member of staff.

Professional supervision. This is a more formal process that takes place away from the workplace. Traditionally, practitioners such as social workers and mental health staff have professional supervision. A financial cost is often attached, not dissimilar to

counseling. The supervisor will focus on reflection and problem-solving of work place issues.

Coaching. A coach works with a person to achieve professional and personal goals. Coaches tend to take more of a teaching approach to professional development.

Buddy. A buddy system is when one member of staff is teamed up with another member of staff to work alongside them. The buddy is very similar to a preceptor 4.

Benefits of mentoring

As a mentee, you can benefit from being mentored because you have an opportunity to learn from someone who is knowledgeable. As a mentor, you benefit from mentoring because you are able to share your knowledge with someone who wants to learn.

Benefits for the organisation/employer

From an organisational and professional view point, mentoring is seen as an effective means of supporting staff, encouraging professional development and life-long learning. This is particularly important for staff who work in geographical and professional isolation. The long term effects of mentoring are believed to be decreased stress and burnout, as well as increased job satisfaction. Staff become more motivated and committed to the organisation. Productivity is increased. Staff recruitment and retention is improved 1. Staff become increasingly competent and confident, as well as share knowledge and skills. This has the flow-on effect of boosting organisations' and employers' culture and image 3.

What is eMentoring?

eMentoring is mentoring using online forms of communication 5:

- email
- discussion groups
- bulletin boards
- instant messaging
- web conference
- wikis
- blogs

eMentoring helps mentoring become an option for you when you do not normally have access to a mentor. eMentoring allows you to have a much greater choice of mentor beyond your local area. It allows you to choose a mentor who meets your needs, as opposed to having to take whoever is around at the time. Whilst eMentoring still requires a time commitment, there is greater flexibility which allows you to communicate outside normal working hours at a time that is convenient to you.

Group/community eMentoring

At times, it is not possible or desirable for one-on-one mentoring relationships. In this case, one mentor may work with a group of mentees. The group will come together with the mentor leading with reflective questions and feedback ⁶. The synergy that is produced by the different members of the group can add a different dimension to the mentoring process.

Online communication tools for eMentoring

In the online environment, communication channels may involve synchronous meetings using web conference tools such as Elluminate (<http://www.illuminate.com>) and Skype (<http://www.skype.com>). Asynchronous conversations may be held using tools such as:

- blogs (<http://blogspot.com>)

- wikis (<http://www.wikispaces.com>)
- community venues including Ning (<http://www.ning.com>) or Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>)
- email groups like Google Groups (<http://groups.google.com>).

Part Two Information for mentees

Benefits for mentees

There are a range of benefits of mentoring for mentees 2, 7.

- Personal growth.
- Increase confidence.
- Support with developing and achieving goals.
- Support for career development especially at the beginning of one's career or returning to practice, and at specific defining moments such as a change of work role e.g moving from clinical practice into management and working for promotion through your organisation.
- Increased job satisfaction.
- A sounding board for ideas and plans.
- A 'safe' place to debrief and critically reflect on practice.
- Positive and constructive feedback on professional and personal development.
- Extended network for support and development.
- Opportunity to develop new skills.

- Potential to gain promotion.



Think of a situation when you received mentoring support be it at school, work, or in an informal/social context. Why did you require mentoring – what did you want to achieve? How did mentoring help you to achieve your goals?

Why do you want to be involved with mentoring?

Some people will have very definite ideas about why they want to be involved in a mentoring relationship and what they want to achieve. It may be very practical reasons, for example:

- your boss has offered to give you paid time to take part in the mentoring program.

Other people may have concrete things they want to achieve:

- you choose to be a mentor because you know it will be useful for your career;
- you wish to be mentored because you are working through a particularly difficult issues at work.

For other people, their aims may be less concrete:

- you want support at the time an event or issue crops up.

Whatever the reasons for seeking to be part of a mentoring relationship, be aware that your aims and goals may change as the relationship grows and develops, and you may need to review them as time goes by.

Setting goals

You will get a lot more out of your mentoring relationship if you have an idea of what you want to achieve. You may have a specific goal for example you may want to develop

a specific clinical skill or require support with a particular project. On the other hand, you may not have an explicit goal but rather want the mentoring relationship to provide you with support to enable you to become a more confident practitioner. Whatever the goals are, they should be flexible because they are likely to change and grow over a period of time.

When deciding on your goals, it is important to make them realistic within the constraints of time, resources and opportunities. Break the goals down into smaller, achievable ones. For example, your long-term goal may be to achieve promotion.

Within that overarching goal may be several smaller goals such as:

- updating your CV;
- acquiring the skills you would need in this new position by attending workshops or study days;
- identifying what you can do to show you are already functioning at the level you would need to be at in the new position;
- talk to your manager about your goals.

Your goals may be very short term ones or long term goals that may extend past the end of your mentoring relationship.

Another thing to think about is whether you have a professional development plan or career plan. This is something else you can develop with your mentor.



Think of a goal/plan you wish to achieve and document it. Items in your plan may include:

- Goal or objective to be achieved;

- Commencement date;
- Completion or review date;
- Key steps;
- Resources required;
- Results – how you will measure them;
- Others involved;
- Trouble shooting – how to overcome potential problems or barriers to your goal/plan.

How to choose a mentor

Here are some questions to ask yourself when you are choosing a mentor 7.

- Do you mind what gender the mentor is?
 - Would you be uncomfortable having a mentor who is the opposite gender?
How would it affect your relationship?
- Do you want a mentor who is the same ethnicity, religion or age as you?
 - What potential problems could occur if you work with someone of a different ethnicity, religion or age?
- How do you feel about having a mentor who works in a different job or profession?
 - What is more important to you – the mentor has a similar background to you, or has broad skills and experience to help you?

Other considerations

Whilst you may feel more comfortable working with a mentor who is the ‘same’ as you, it could actually be a good learning experience to work with someone who is different; different gender, ethnicity, profession and so on. You may find this challenging but it

could also be stimulating. It may help you appreciate the different approaches people have and help you manage these differences.

Roles and responsibilities of the mentee

- Be committed to your mentoring relationship.
 - Respond promptly to communication like emails.
 - Attend online meetings as arranged.
- Negotiate how your mentoring relationship will work.
 - Make it clear what the aims and goals of your relationship are to be.
- Identify your learning and development needs.
- Expect to be challenged on issues facing your work, as well as your strengths and weaknesses.
- Honour your agreed relationship and boundaries.
- Actively ‘listen’ to your mentor and be prepared to discuss any reservations.
- Being respectful even if you disagree with mentor.
- Be prepared to stand up for yourself.
- Remaining accountable for the work you do.
- Take responsibility for your learning.
 - Do not rely on your mentor to do all the work.
- Be culturally aware.
 - race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality 2.

Part Three Information for mentors

Benefits of mentoring for mentors

There are many benefits for mentors including:

- Opportunity to play a part in someone's personal and professional development;
- Share your wisdom and knowledge;
- Increased communication and interpersonal skills which will enhance your own professional development;
- Increased awareness and understanding of your own knowledge, beliefs and attitudes;
- Personal growth;
- Developing/increasing leadership skills;
- Contribute to the development of your own career;
- Developing collegiality and collaboration;
- Hearing a different perspective;
- Contribute to the future of aged/community care .



Think of a situation when you received mentoring support be it at school, work, or in an informal/social context. Why did you require mentoring – what did you want to achieve? How did mentoring help you to achieve your goals?



Think of why you want to be a mentor. Items in your plan may include:

- Goal or objective to be achieved;
- Commencement date;
- Completion or review date;
- Key steps;
- Resources required;
- Results – how you will measure them;
- Others involved;
- Trouble shooting – how to overcome potential problems or barriers to your goal/plan.

What makes an effective mentor?

- Be committed to your mentoring relationship.
 - Respond promptly to communication like emails.
 - Attend online synchronous meetings as arranged.
- Be respectful and non-judgmental.
- Be culturally aware.
 - race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.
- Be an effective communicator.
 - Take time to read communications such as emails.
 - Prepare for online meetings.
 - Respond in an appropriate way that address issues brought up by your mentee.
 - Take ‘netiquette’ into consideration (more on this later).
- Ask questions in a way that supports constructive reflection.

- Do not be negative, criticise or say things that are demoralising.
- Check out with your mentee if she/he understands your questions and comments.
- Remember that online communication is different because you do not have clues from body language that would normally be picked up in a face-to-face conversation.
- Support your mentee in her/his reflection and learning.
 - You should not tell your mentee what to do, or do it for him/her.
 - Your relationship should be driven by the mentee's needs, aims and goals.
- Accept that your mentee may have a different opinion or way of working from you.
- Recognise that the mentoring relationship is a partnership with you both having equal status.
- Accept that mentoring is not about 'teaching' but learning.
 - You will learn alongside your mentee ^{7, 8}.



Think of a person who has worked with you in a mentoring role.

He/She may not have been a formally identified mentor, but may have been someone you respected and turned to for help and support. Identify what attracted you to the mentor and think about how he/she supported your learning and development.

Roles and responsibilities of the mentor may include:

- Helping your mentee to develop his/her personal and professional aims and goals;

- Making opportunities for your mentee to reflect, and develop action plans that result from the reflection;
- Asking ‘critical’ questions that guide the mentee’s reflection and learning;
- Providing feedback about the mentee’s performance and plans;
- Being a source of information;
- Providing advice and support so your mentee can [establish](#) his/her career;
- Providing support and counseling at times when the mentee faces particular stress and challenges;
- Helping the mentee understand how his/her employing organisation works;
- Supporting the mentee to develop strategies to deal with workplace challenges;
- Helping your mentee with networking throughout the aged care industry 4.

Working with your mentee

Your job is to work with your mentee to identify and clarify her/his goals, professional development and career plan. You need to keep in mind the constraints of time and resources that may affect the mentee, and make sure that the goals are achievable. The mentee may have a very clear idea of what he/she wants to achieve. On the other hand, she may have entered this mentoring scheme with little idea of what to expect. You will be required to work with her to clarify her needs and develop a plan to meet those needs. His/her goals may range from the development of a career plan to becoming a more reflective practitioner. Here are some areas you can explore with the mentee in order to help her identify her goals.

- What is his/her current skills and expertise?
- Where does she/he see herself in the next three to five years?
- What skills and expertise would she/he like to develop in the future?
- How do these that fit with the requirements of the employer?

- What resources are required to achieve those aims?
- Is there anything concrete he/she needs to do such as a formal course of education?
- Is the “timeline” a realistic time frame - will it be achieved within the time frame of your mentoring relationship?

Questions to ask to when working with your mentee to set goals:

- How does he/she feel about her goals she has set?
- Are they his/her goals or someone else’s goals?
- How realistic are the goals?
- What must he/she do to achieve the goals?
- How can you help him/her achieve the goals?
- How you can both work together so he/she can achieve the goals?

Encouraging reflective practice

In the mentoring relationship it is usually the mentor who asks the questions that encourage the mentee to think beyond an event or idea. Critical thinking happens as you talk to each other and bounce ideas off each other. This is believed to be a vital part of the mentoring process ¹⁰. It helps to reflect with someone else and hear an objective perspective on things. This reflection you do with another person is called reflective dialogue. It can lead to:

- thinking what you have done and what you can do in the future;
- considering your values and beliefs;
- learning about learning itself e.g. thinking about the process that led to change.

How you may lead reflective dialogue

1. Summarise the main points that come from the mentee's story.
2. Make sure you both understand what the issues are. If you are using written communication like emails, this may take a couple of interactions back and forth.
3. Use questions to encourage your mentee to think in greater depth.
4. Use open questions - what, how, where, when, who & why.
 - Feelings: why were you there, what else happened, how did you feel, who else was involved?
 - Thinking: what surprised you, what was different, what did you think?
 - Actions: what would you do differently, when will you do this, who can help you?
5. Respond to your mentee with understanding and compassion as appropriate.
6. Summarise what you have both talked about, including what has been learnt and future actions .

Part Four Teaching and Learning

Before entering into a mentoring relationship it is helpful to think about how you learn and identify what type of learner you are. There are a number of theories of learning. The constructionist theory of learning says that the teacher helps the student to learn by problem-solving and personal experience. People make their own meaning and don't rely on memorising facts and the 'right' answers. Mentoring takes the constructionist approach to learning. The mentor does not tell the mentee what she should do or know, but rather acts as a sign post that helps the mentee to find his/her own way 9.

eLearning

There are different types of learners and styles of learning.

- Visual learners - you learn by seeing, reading text, making diagrams and detailed notes.
- Auditory learners – you learn through listening.
- Kinetic learners - you learn through doing and touching.

If you are a visual learner you will not find written communication such as email to be a problem. But if you are an auditory or kinetic learners, you may find written communication more difficult to learn from. Therefore, it is useful to use different forms of online communication and sharing information, so that all types of learning style are catered for.

- Face-to-face communication with web cam – Skype (www.skype.com), Elluminate (www.illuminate.com).
- Video - Animoto (www.animoto.com), YouTube (www.youtube.com).
- Audio - Voice Thread (www.voicethread.com).
- Photo exchanges - SlideShare (www.slideshare.com), Flickr (www.flickr.com).

There are also a number of other online tools that allow you to carry out activities together which may be useful in developing the mentoring relationship, and identifying needs and goals such as mind-mapping (www.mindmeister.com).



Carry out an online assessment of your learning style.

(http://www.ulc.arizona.edu/learning_style.php). How you will get the most out of online communication in a mentoring relationship if you are an auditory or kinetic learner?

Reflective practice

What's the big deal about reflective practice and why is it such an important element of mentoring? The main reasons are because reflection makes you question your thoughts and actions. This in turn can help you:

- Change your work practice
- resolve conflicts
- increase self-esteem and satisfaction
- produce work-based knowledge
- increase your ability to adjust to new circumstances ¹⁰.

Critical reflection is the process you go through when you think about your work, attitudes, beliefs, ideas and actions. You challenge yourself by asking questions that get you thinking.



Think about an incident that has happened in your work. This may be an incident that went well or not so well; something that made you think about your job or an incident that was very demanding. Ask yourself the following questions and document them.

- Where and when did it happen?
- Why is it important to you?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What were your feelings then?
- What did you find demanding or satisfying?
- What would you do if you found yourself in a similar situation differently?
- How do you feel now?

- What did you learn from the incident?
- How would you change your practice?
- If you wouldn't change your practice, why not?
- What broader ethical, political or social issues arose from this situation?

Story telling

Story telling is a powerful method of getting across a point, or encouraging reflection ¹¹. Reading or hearing a story can make the subject seem much more real. However, you have to be careful or a story telling session can disintegrate into a gossip session or become widely exaggerated in order to capture attention.



Think of a story from your work that you think would be a tool for facilitating reflection. What is the issue that you would like to emphasise, or question you would like to raise?

Part Five The mentoring relationship

Phases of a mentoring relationship

A mentoring relationship has several stages ¹².

1. Getting to know each other

The first stage is when the relationship starts. During this phase you will develop the boundaries of your relationship, set aims and goals, and get to know each other.

2. Working things out

During the middle stage you will work together. The mentee becomes more independent and the mentor learns from the mentee. The dissolving stage is when the mentoring relationship comes to an end and involves a review or reflection of what has been achieved.

3. Moving on

The final stage includes a re-defining of the relationship. You may become friends and view each other as equals and valuable resources. It may be that your relationship does not continue in any form, especially if the relationship was unsatisfactory.

Time commitment

How much time you have to commit to the relationship and how often you communicate with each other will depend on what type of mentoring relationship you have. It will depend on the goals you are attempting to achieve, and the types of communication you are using. You may agree to communicate with each other at strictly time-tabled intervals, or when and if the need arises. At first the meetings or interactions may be quite frequent, but as the mentee becomes more confident or achieves his/her goals, the interactions may become less frequent¹³.

Preparing for the mentoring relationship

– setting goals and objectives ^{4, 6}

Before you can get started in a mentoring relationship, you will need to think about what you want from this relationship – this applies to both mentor and mentee. Part of this process will involve completing the mentoring contract between you and your mentoring partner.

Agreeing to ground rules

– agreeing a mentoring contract Appendix One 4, 6

Before the mentoring relationship gets going you are advised to develop a mentoring contract. The contract will act as a basis for the mentoring relationship and may be referred to throughout the mentoring period. There may also be times when it is re-negotiated. This contract acts as a beginning point for the mentoring relationship. Ground rules may vary from relationship to relationship, but are likely to include agreement about 10:

- the objectives of the mentoring relationship;
- expectations what you both will do;
- how to communicate;
- boundaries – what personal information is disclosed;
- confidentiality, both in terms of personal and patient confidentiality;
- creating a safe environment to ‘talk’ as well as giving and receiving constructive feedback;
- being non-judgmental;
- respecting each other’s views;
- being honest and open;
- challenging the statement, and not the person;
- being prepared to ask questions;
- being prepared to be challenged;
- renegotiation of the contract if necessary;
- maintaining a professional relationship;
- dealing with conflict;

- ‘no-fault’ clause to ending the relationship if you do not get on;
- when to end the relationship.

It is very important to think about the legalities of your relationship. In this day of litigation, there is the potential for mentors to be sued as a result of the advice that they gave a mentee, especially if the advice leads to some sort of ‘negative’ outcome. Therefore, it is important to discuss this, and you may need to insert a disclaimer into the mentoring contract. You are responsible for your own practice, and should always view advice in relation to your professional and employment responsibilities, standards and policies.

“Netiquette” - rules of computer-mediated communication (CMC)

Online communication is a little different than face-to-face meetings and has specific challenges, especially if you are using asynchronous tools such as email or synchronous text tools such as instant messages.

On the one hand, it can be difficult because you do not have body language to help you see the impact of what you are saying (unless you use web cam). For example, it is easy to respond to an email without thinking about what you are saying and accidentally be offensive. It is also easy to misunderstand the implications of an email compared to face-to-face communication. If you are asking challenging questions you need to think how you can frame up the questions in a way that is not rude. You may need to check in regularly with your mentor/mentee to make sure that he/she understands what you are trying to say.

On the other hand, CMC can be quite liberating and allow you to say things that you might be too embarrassed to reveal in a face-to-face setting. Because you cannot see the person, you are not so quick to make judgments based on physical appearance.

Communication using asynchronous tools such as email, is not necessarily less time consuming because you need to read the email and think carefully about how you will respond. However, email is flexible and allows you to respond at a time convenient to you. You must make sure you reply within the time limits agreed. Whilst you cannot be physically comforting i.e give the person a hug, you can use words to be supportive.

Here are a few 'rules' to help you with your online communication.

- Do not use inflammatory language.
- Do not use capital letters because that means you are shouting.
- Think carefully before you respond to a written communication.
 - Read your reply out loud before you send it, especially if you are unsure how it reads.
- If you are offended in any way, ask the sender to clarify what he/she means.
 - His/her meaning may be very different to how you understand it.
- If you receive an upsetting communication, do not respond straight away.
 - Take time to consider your response.
- Use emoticons (pictures of smiley faces) to show how you are feeling.
 - For example, if you are making a joke and you are worried it might be taken the wrong way, send a 'smiling face' so the person you are 'talking' to knows you are joking.

Developing your online relationship

When you first start communicating you will need to introduce yourself and give information about who you are. It is up to you how much personal information you share. You may exchange photographs or videos of yourselves, your work places or where you live – that depends on how you want your mentoring relationship to develop.

In an online meeting, the mentor should:

- Take notes about the meeting, what was discussed and actions to be taken
(**Appendix Two**);
- Review your notes about the previous meeting; what was discussed and actions to be taken;
- Focus on a given issue;
- Explore it in depth;
- Agree on action to be taken;
- End by summarising the session;
- Repeat actions to be taken 10.

This can be a little more difficult with written messages such as email or blog posts that fire back and forth. As the mentor, you may attempt a similar format with each thread of conversation [a thread is a topic of conversation, which may run through a number of text messages or emails].

Evaluation of the relationship

For both mentors and mentees, it is worth thinking at intervals about how you are performing in the relationship. Think in terms of what you can **start**, **stop** and **continue** in order to be a more effective mentor/mentee.

Mentoring relationships some times do not work out. This may be for a number of reasons:

- Mis-match of personalities;
- Lack of understanding about the mentoring process;
- Lack of commitment to the mentoring relationship;
- Difference of philosophies, values and beliefs;
- Lack of organisational support.

You are a ‘toxic’ mentor if you:

- Manipulate your mentee;
- Block your mentee from learning and developing;
- Criticise and belittle the mentee;
- Are never available;
- Undermine your mentee both in private and public 1.



Len and Simon

Len was a general manager of a community care organisation. Simon was new to a managerial position and chose Len to be his mentor because he had had many years of managerial experience in community care. However, Simon found it very difficult to work with Len because Len never listened to what Simon was saying, and only wanted to talk about his own experiences and opinions. Simon withdrew from the mentoring relationship when it got back to him that Len had been talking about Simon in derogatory terms to colleagues.

As a mentee you will not grow if you:

- are overly dependent on the mentor
- do not respond in any way to your mentor
- totally disregard everything your mentors says 1.



Alisi and Tamsin

Tamsin was a level three care giver who was mentored by Alisi who was a nurse nearing retirement. Tamsin very rarely answered the emails that Alisi sent her, and the emails that she sent were very rude. Tamsin argued with most things that Alisi said. Alisi eventually

stopped emailing Tamsin because she felt Tamsin was disrespectful, and did not appreciate Alisi's wisdom and years of experience.

'No-fault' clause

Open & transparent communication. If the mentoring relationship breaks down it is really important that you do not blame each other. You should not make each other feel that the other has 'failed'. It is highly recommended that you have a 'no-fault' clause in the mentoring contract that you sign (see Appendix One).

If you are part of a formal eMentoring program make sure there is a third party who is available to provide support, advice and debriefing, especially your relationship is not working according to plan.

Dealing with conflict

Conflict can occur in any situation where two people work together, especially in an intense mentoring relationship. If you are experiencing conflict it is important to work out what is causing it:

- A clash of personality;
- Different opinions;
- A misunderstanding, which can happen easily in online relationships.

Personal attacks can result when conflict turns from issues to personality. They are often irrational, caused by emotions such as anger and frustration. It can be hard to work through issues of conflict, but when you do persevere it can have a positive effect on your relationship.

Here are some ideas about how to deal with conflict within the mentoring relationship 14,
15.

- Maintain a supportive environment, do not be defensive.
- Do not be judgmental.
- Be prepared to be honest about how you feel.
- Use 'I' statements because they explain your view points. Do not use 'you' statements because they can sound judgmental.
- Do not be haughty or patronising.
- Do not communicate when you are feeling angry.
- Have a clear plan of what you want to happen or achieve in your discussions.
- Be specific about why you feel there is conflict.
 - Use facts to explain your concerns, not vague accusations.
- Do not rehash past disagreements.
- Keep an open mind and carefully consider feedback.
- Acknowledge that the other person has a right to his/her own views even if you do not agree with them.
- Do not take it personally if your feedback is rejected.
- Check that you fully understand the meanings behind messages you are giving and receiving.
- Use facts in your discussions and not opinions.
- Work out a goal that you can agree even if it may require a degree of compromise.
- Stay focused on shared goals and do not be distracted into arguments.
- Agree on a time for reviewing the situation.
 - If anyone is still unhappy, start the process again.
- Be prepared to 'agree to disagree' and to move on from that point.
- Do not be rude or disrespectful.



Amy, Nicky, Erika and James

Amy was mentoring Nicky, Erika and James as a group. They met every couple of weeks for a group discussion using Skype. It became noticeable that James was becoming increasingly aggressive and rude at the meetings. Amy arranged a one-on-one meeting to find out what the problem was. James admitted that he felt out of place with the three women, and felt they were judging him because he was a man. He felt they were excluding him and being sexist by doing things like making anti-men jokes. Amy took this issue back to Nicky and Erika who didn't even realise they were behaving in this manner. They all apologised to James at their next meeting and re-negotiated the terms of their meetings to ensure they focused on relevant issues. Amy adjusted her own behavior to make sure she guided the meetings in a professional manner. James responded in a very positive way, and fully participated in the group meetings.

Questions that you can ask each other to start discussion about the conflict you are having.

- Do you believe there is conflict?
- How do you feel about it?
- How do you feel we should resolve this?
- How should we resolve any future conflict?

The advantage of text-based communications in the situation of managing conflict is that the issues can be clearly documented and are recorded for you to read in your own time. You can also take your time to respond. Hopefully, this will encourage you to carefully think about the conflict and resolve the problems you are having.

If conflict cannot be sorted within the mentoring relationship in a formal mentoring program, there may be people available to act as intermediaries at the request of either mentor or mentee. Three-way online mediation ‘meetings’ are an option.



Think of a situation of where you experienced conflict. How did you manage it, and how would you do differently now?

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is an important part of learning and professional development, and is an essential element of a mentoring relationship.



Consider these questions.

- If you described the feedback you have received recently, what words would you use?
- What are the features of constructive feedback?
- What do you think colleagues consider as constructive feedback?
- Do you seek feedback on your performance?
- Do you seek feedback on your feedback?
- What are the results of destructive feedback?
- What are the results of constructive feedback?

Now, think of a situation where you have had to give a colleague feedback.

- Where did you do it?
- Who was there?
- What did you say/do?
- Do you think the feedback was constructive?
- What do you think the person heard you say?
- What long term effect do you think the feedback had?
- How would you do it differently?
- How would this feedback be given by online communication?

In a mentoring relationship, as a mentor you will give feedback about your mentee's development, ideas and practice. As a mentee you will also give feedback to your mentor about his/her performance as a mentor. Therefore, it is important that you have the skills to give and receive feedback effectively.

Guidelines for giving feedback.

- Give feedback that is of value to the person receiving the feedback, not you the giver.
- Plan what you are going to say.
 - Have a clear purpose for your feedback.
 - Be clear about what feedback you are giving and why.
 - Think about how you want your mentor/mentee to change.
 - Consider how you will evaluate the change.
- Be specific.
 - General comments will not allow a person to learn what is wrong and act on it.

- Instead of saying “you are always late for our online meetings which really stresses me out”, say “you are always late for our agreed meetings which makes me late for my next appointments”.
- Be balanced
 - Start with the positive.
 - Do not use **but** because it undervalues all that has been already said.
 - Limit the amount of negative feedback you give.
 - If you overload the mentor/mentee with too much negative feedback, he/she is likely to ignore all the feedback.
 - End your feedback with a statement of support.
- Use language that will reduce defensiveness.
 - Focus on action/behavior, not on the person.
- Be relevant.
 - Only give feedback on something that can be changed.
 - If you give feedback on something that cannot be changed, that can be destructive leaving the mentee/mentor feeling frustrated and disempowered.
- Own the response – use “I” or “in my opinion” which means that you are taking responsibility for what you are saying.
- Be timely.
 - Give feedback as soon as possible after the interaction that instigates the feedback.
- Think about how you will react to the response to your feedback.

- Are you open to changing your opinion, and admitting that you have changed your mind?
- Once feedback has been received, work out together what the next steps will be.
 - Make sure your mentor/mentee knows he/she has your ongoing support.
- Check how your mentor/mentee has received your feedback.
 - Find out how you can improve your feedback in the future ^{14, 15}.

Receiving feedback

Receiving feedback can be an uncomfortable and even painful process. However, it is important to think carefully about how you react when you receive feedback, especially if it is 'negative'. If you argue or reject feedback without thinking properly about it, you will not learn or develop.

- When receiving feedback, do not jump to conclusions or become defensive.
- If you have any queries about what your mentor/mentee meant, ask his/her to clarify his/her meaning.
- You may wish to check out the feedback with others.
- Don't be afraid to ask for feedback.
- Decide what you will do with the feedback.

Ending the mentoring relationship

A mentoring relationship may vary considerably in length from six to 12 months, to many years. In a formal eMentoring program, the mentoring relationship may end naturally before the program has ended, or continue long afterwards. In most cases the relationship ends because you are ready to move on to the next stage of your development. You may continue to keep in touch with each other, but in different roles such as friends and colleagues.

The final interactions may include a summary of main points of learning and development from both the mentor and mentee's points of view:

- an evaluation of how you have met your goals
- a clear agreement about how you will keep in touch, or not as the case may be
- a plan for how you are going to achieve your goals in the future.

There may be times when the relationship ends unsatisfactorily because of conflict or because a participant is reluctant to let go (becomes dependent on the mentee/mentor). If either situation occurs and cannot be resolved within the relationship, it may be advisable to ask a third person to be intermediary. In a formal eMentoring program, it is important that the program organisers consider how they deal with conflict within mentoring relationships.

Part Six Planning and implementing an eMentoring program

Here are some points to consider when planning and implementing an eMentoring program 2,3,7,12, 14.

1. What do you want to achieve? What are the objectives of the eMentoring program and how do they sit with the objective of the organisation or employer? How will you measure the effectiveness of the eMentoring program?
2. What support do you need from the organisation or employer, both in terms of sponsorship and logistics? For the eMentoring program to succeed you need to have support throughout the organisation so that a mentoring culture develops, and mentoring is valued at every level. You will also need to consider what funding you require to support recruitment, advertising, training, and time release for staff to attend eMentoring activities.
3. What skills and experience will you expect the mentors to have? Will there be criteria to be a mentee?
4. What matching process will you have in place? Will people choose their own mentors or will you carry out the matching? Generally, mentoring is more effective if mentees have some control over their choice of mentor. You also need to consider the effect on the mentoring relationship of gender, religion, age, ethnicity and position within the organisation. For example, a female employee may not wish to be mentored by a male manager; she may feel far more comfortable with a female mentor. At the same time, being mentored by someone who has a different perspective on life can be stimulating and lead to increased learning.
5. What training or education programs will you provide mentors and mentees? What ongoing resources will you make available? Participants need to be educated about mentoring, what it is and how to be mentors/mentees. The eMentoring program is more

likely to collapse if participants do not understand their roles, and what is expected of them.

Education programs should include information about how to start the eMentoring relationship and set boundaries, agreeing to an eMentoring contract, confidentiality and privacy, managing issues that may put the mentor/mentee at risk, giving and receiving feedback, managing conflict, ending the mentoring relationship.

6. What technology is required, and what training is needed so that participants can effectively utilise the technology? Does the organisation or employer have firewalls or policies that block people using online communication? Do people have access to tools that enhance online communication such as web cams and headsets?

7. What ongoing support will you provide participants? A formal eMentoring program is more likely to be successful if you monitor the progress of each mentoring relationship, and seek regular feedback from the mentors and mentees. This increases the chances of sorting out problems that can stop the relationship developing, especially in the early days. Having said that, if you try to impose too much formality onto participants, you may make things too onerous for people to participate in the program.

Support strategies may include devising opportunities for mentees and mentors to meet at face-to-face meetings/workshops, regular online meetings and/or asynchronous forums such as email groups, blogs or wikis.

Information about how implementing eMentoring programs

Further information about how to implement an eMentoring program can be found from:

Mentor. National Mentoring Partnership. **Elements of effective practice:**

http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_411.pdf

Anne Rolfe. **Mentoring Demystified:**

http://naturalconsulting.com.au/docs/mentoring_ar.pdf

Triple Creek Associates. **Top 10 Questions about mentoring programs:**

http://www.3creek.com/resources/booklets/Top10_Questions.pdf

Web sites with mentoring resources

<http://www.3creek.com>

The Triple Creek Associates. This is a fabulous web site with work books that are great resources for mentors and mentees – a ‘must’ to look at.

<http://www.mentoring-works.com>

Ann Rolfe carries out mentoring workshops and has published books and guidelines for mentoring. This is her web site that allows you to download some very useful free resources.

http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/mentoring/policy_and_guidelines.asp#the_mentoring_policy

Mentoring at the University of Queensland. This web site has the guidelines for mentoring as a tool for staff development.

<http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/ResourceCentre/Articles/Default.asp>

The Coaching and Mentoring network has some useful articles if you want to know more about mentoring.

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A894BBCC1EFDF07CCA257070002F45D4/\\$File/mentor.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A894BBCC1EFDF07CCA257070002F45D4/$File/mentor.pdf)

Mentoring for nurses in Australia – fact sheets.

<http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/resources/mentoring.htm>

Mentoring resources that have been put together by Charlene Carpenter, TAFE NSW, South Western Sydney Institute.

Glossary of terms

Asynchronous	Online communication between two people happening at different times.
Blog	A blog is a web site that is usually kept by a person to publish information and personal thoughts. There are a number of free programs that can be used on the Internet to set up a blog.
Video and can leave develop.	images can be published as well as text. Readers messages on the blog, and conversations can develop.
Life-long learning believed that	Learning takes place at all stages of life and in all settings, not just within formal institutions or education programs. It is at least 80% learning is informal.
Mentee	The person receiving mentoring support from a mentor.
Mentor	An experienced person who walks alongside you as guide and support.
Networking	Meeting new people and sharing resources and information.
Online meeting	This is an event when people meet up using online tools for communication such as Skype and Elluminate.
Preceptorship	Working with someone to orientate and support them to a new job or organization.
Reflection	Thinking about an action or event which results in personal learning.

Sponsorship	When a person is introduced by a more senior person into an organisation, group or network.
Synchronous	Online communication between two people happening at the same time.
Wiki	A wiki is a web site that more than one person can edit, add to and use for collaboration.
Web cam	A camera that plugs into a computer that allows people to be seen as well as heard at online meetings.

Appendices

Appendix One Mentoring Contract

MENTORING CONTRACT	
Name of mentee:	
Name of mentor:	
Goals of the mentee:	
Responsibilities of the mentee:	
Responsibilities of the mentor:	
Time frame for responding to emails or arranging online meetings:	
We agree to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship, for whatever reason.	
Disclaimer: We agree that we are responsible for our individual practice and cannot be held responsible for the outcomes of advice that we give. Any advice given should be acted upon in the context of professional and employment responsibilities, standards and policies.	
Signed:	
	(mentee) Date _____
	(mentor) Date _____
Adopted from: Klasen, N. & Clutterbuck, D. (2004). Implementing mentoring schemes: a practical guide to successful programs. London: Elsevier. Brookbank, A. & McGill, I. (2006). Facilitating reflective learning through mentoring and coaching.	

Appendix Two Reflective Record

Date	Topics/ issues discussed	Actions to be taken	General comments

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